

Living God's Way in Today's World
Week 1 – How to Overcome Trials and Temptations
Scripture: James 1:1-18

Message Mate

- Everyone faces trials and temptations, yet when they come, some people wonder what they did wrong to have these trials or temptations. But, if you think every bad thing that happens is your fault, then you can get very down about yourself and your life. What if you saw trials and temptations as an opportunity to grow?
- James writes, “when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. What if you saw troubles as resistance training (like lifting weights to grow muscle strength) that could grow your character and godliness. James shows us three ways to grow through trials and temptations.
- The first way to overcome trials and temptations is to ask for wisdom. If you ask for wisdom, God longs to give it generously, without finding fault in your life, but you need to ask with faith. Don't be of two minds, wondering if God really wants to give you wisdom. Pray with faith and expectation that God wants to generously give you wisdom to know how to walk through the trials and temptations that will come your way.
- Secondly, be aware of the temptation of financial status. Those with less finances can be tempted to feel insignificant or powerless when the world says “you haven't made it”. But if you are humbled by the world's standards, rejoice in your spiritual riches (Ephesians 2:6,7). Don't put yourself down because you have less material wealth. In contrast, wealthy Christians should be humbled by the reality that they are saved by Jesus Christ who humbled himself more than anyone, and they should be humble by being willing to associate themselves with poorer brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Thirdly, expect temptations and see them as growth opportunities. God may allow trials and temptations to come your way, but God will not tempt you. If God allowed Jesus to face trials and temptations, then trials and temptations will come your way regardless of how good you are. Face them with joy, seeing them as an opportunity to grow in godly character. You will be tempted, but how you respond is your decision. If you fail the test, don't blame God. The godly person is not the one who faces less trials and temptations, but who overcomes those trials and temptations. Don't go looking for them, but be ready when they come, seeing them as an opportunity to grow in endurance and godliness.
- You are blessed when you persevere under trials. Face trials with joy for the opportunities they give you to grow in godliness.

Some Questions to Consider

1. When you face trials and temptations, what is your typical response: 1) what wrong have I done to deserve this, or 2) how can I grow through this?
2. Read James 1:2-4. It starts with: "Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy?" Has this been your typical practice? Have you allowed the "testing" of your faith to remove impurities in your lives (like refining of silver or gold with extreme heat).
3. Wisdom can be acquired during the experiences of life, but wisdom is also given by God when we ask Him for wisdom. Read James 1:5-8, Exodus 35:30,31, Deut 34:9, 1 Kings 4:29, Luke 21:15, Acts 6:3, 1 Corinthians 2:13. Discuss the evidence from these verses that wisdom is a gift of God. Have you intentionally asked God for the gift of wisdom? Do you believe that God desires to generously give you wisdom?
4. Financial status can become a temptation for the poor and the rich. Discuss James 1:9-11, in light of Ephesians 2:6,7 (for the poor) and Philippians 2:6-11 (for the rich).
5. Discuss the following statement in light of the life of Jesus. "The godly person is not the one who faces less trials and temptations, but who overcomes those trials and temptations."
Think of a time when you have overcome a trial or temptation (possibly with joy) and discuss that as a testimony of God's goodness to you and as an encouragement that you have overcome before and will overcome trials and temptations again.

Pray – Ask God for the gift of wisdom.

Give thanks for when you have a testimony of having overcome trials and temptations and ask God to help you continue to overcome them. Ask God to help you have joy when you are facing trials and temptations so that you can continue to grow in endurance and godliness.